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Washington MERRY-GO- ROUND

By Drew Pearson

(The author of this column is given the widest latitude. His views do not necessarily reflect those of the Mirror.)

WASHINGTON, Oct. 31.—

Congressman Diplomat

THOUGH IT didn't get into the headlines, one of the unofficial diplomats who helped to smooth out the important Trieste problem was Democratic Rep. John Blatnik of Minnesota, an American of Yugoslav descent. Three times during the war, Maj. Blatnik was parachuted behind German lines into Yugoslavia where he worked with the Yugoslav underground against the Nazis.

Last year Rep. Blatnik happened to be in Yugoslavia at the time the United States and England pulled their boner demanding — without advance notification — that Tito evacuate Trieste. Following that ultimatum, Tito mobilized troops, and Yugoslav public opinion reached a fever pitch.

Blatnik, who was on the scene, immediately called on Tito, persuaded him to enter into direct negotiations with Italy. Then he flew by military plane to NATO headquarters in Paris to report to Gen. Alfred Gruenther. His conferences helped to get Yugoslavia back into the groove as far as diplomatic talks were concerned.

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